NAME: FLOCK IT (de-fusion & acceptance exercise)

SOURCE:
- Activity – James Hill OTR/L 2017 (Inspired by comment of participant in 2017 ACT Boot Camp – San Diego)

INTENTION: The exercise can be applied in almost any context to establish a flexible metaphor for de-fusion.

MATERIALS:
- Cartoon Picture of Sheep
- Something to write with
- Tape

SCRIPT: Written instructions for group leader.

Today we are going to use a metaphor to talk about how we can best respond to difficult thought and feelings. I want everyone to bring to mind some thoughts and feelings that, when they show up, get in the way of you living your life. See if you can bring some of these thoughts to mind, and recall where in your body you feel these feelings. I want you to give these thoughts and feelings a “pet name” and write that name on the sheep. Don’t over-think this. You don’t have to have the perfect name that describes this. It can be Frank, or Martha, or Stinky, whatever you want. When you have written the name on your sheep I am going to give you some tape and ask you to hang it up.

In a group this will fill the room with a herd of sheep. It can be useful at this point to introduce another activity, or shift to talking if it is an individual session. As the session progresses you can notice “sheep” showing up. You might even name them and put them up.

OPTION:
- A more detailed option is to have people write physical sensations they experience when the sheep is present inside the sheep’s body and thoughts that arise when the sheep is present outside the sheep’s body.

DISCUSSION: Possible questions or topic to address

- Can we notice what this sheep is saying?
- You can observe that throughout life your sheep comes and goes?
  - Has it ever been eliminated from the herd?
- Which sheep get 100% of your attention when they are in the room?
  - What happens to your behavioral when you are focused on nothing but this sheep, and where does this take you?
  - What other sheep in the herd do not get your attention (fluffy, snowball…)?
- How do you solve a sheep problem?
  - It can be helpful to discuss exposure therapy for phobias
  - The goal with your sheep is to become more willing to have them, without buying what they say, and without giving them 100% of your attention.

HOMEWORK:
- It can be helpful to suggest that clients notice when these feelings (sheep) show up, and when they do, say to themselves, “hello (pet name)”, and give them permission to be present.